

Victim Impact Program

Clark County Juvenile Court is committed to responding to the needs of victims of juvenile offenders in ways that address the harms they have experienced.

Victims have clearly stated what issues are most important to them and the response they would like to receive from the justice system. People who have been victimized by a criminal offense generally want:

- Acknowledgement
- Information
- A voice
- A choice to participate

The purpose of the Victim Impact Program is to respond to these specific victim-focused concerns.

Acknowledgement

People victimized by crime state with great consistency that it is important to them to have the justice system, as representatives of the community, **acknowledge** the harm done to them as crime victims. They want to know the community takes seriously what has

happened to them and is committed to responding in meaningful ways. **The Victim Impact Program is a specific way in which Clark County Juvenile Court clearly states that this community is concerned about people victimized by crime.** As a community, we are committed to responding to victims in ways that address the harms they have experienced.

Information

Victims of crime want to know what the community's justice system is doing about the harm done to them. **What steps have been taken? Where in the legal process do matters stand? What, if any part, do they have in the resolving of this offense?** The *Victim Impact Program* seeks to provide information to victims that address these questions.

The type of crime and its seriousness can often effect how quickly the Juvenile Court can provide information. Some cases go through several time-consuming steps before they come to diversion or probation counselors. **It is the Juvenile Court's commitment to contact victims and provide them with information as quickly as possible.**

In diversion cases with identifiable victims the *Victim Impact Program* tries to contact victims before the accused comes in for the first meeting with a Diversion Counselor.

A Voice

People victimized by crime not only want to receive information, they want to be able to provide information. It is important that victims of crime be given the opportunity to tell the community's justice system: **what happened to them, how they have been impacted and what they would like to see happen to hold the offender accountable for the harm done.**

The *Victim Impact Program* initiates contact with victims to provide an opportunity for victims to tell their story and to identify the issues that are important to them. While the victim's voice is not the only voice in determining how the community will hold offenders accountable, they need to be **a voice**. And that voice needs the opportunity to be heard and respected.

A Choice to Participate

People harmed by crime should have a meaningful role in the community's response to that offense. Their voice and participation should be encouraged. How, and if, a crime victim wants to have a role in the response to a crime should always be the **victim's choice**. But there should be a choice.

The ***Victim Impact Program*** provides victims with the opportunity to participate in the community's response to crime by: being informed, providing input and, where it is appropriate and safe, to be actively involved in the justice process.

These options for participation are discussed with victims through personal contact made by the Victim Impact Program. **Victims of crime are enabled to make an informed choice about how their needs are best addressed.**

This program of the Clark County Juvenile Court is offered in partnership with the City of Vancouver's Department of Community Services.

Mission

The mission of Clark County Juvenile Court, in partnership with the community is to:

- ❖ Faithfully perform our responsibilities as mandated by the Constitution of the United States and laws of the State of Washington;
- ❖ Be good stewards of the public trust;
- ❖ Address harms done to victims;
- ❖ Hold offenders accountable for repairing the harm to victims and the community;
- ❖ Provide opportunities for learning and positive change; and
- ❖ Share in creating safe and healthy neighborhoods and community.



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VICTIM IMPACT PROGRAM



Clark County Juvenile Court is committed to the holistic implementation of Balanced & Restorative Justice principles, which includes the acknowledgement of harms done to victims and providing meaningful assistance in addressing those harms.